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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS.

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LES DU CERCEAU, LEUR VIE ET LEUR ŒUVRE, d'après de nouvelles recherches, par Le Baron HENRY DE GEYMÜLLER, *etc.*: 137 gravures dans le texte, et 4 planches hors texte, pour la majeure partie inédites. 4to, pp. x-348: Paris 1887, Rouam (Bibliothèque internationale de l'Art).

There can be no doubt that M. de Geymüller has been for years collecting his materials for this book; but the immediate cause of its being finished and brought out, first in the pages of *l'Art* and then in a quarto, is the acquisition by the Royal Library of Munich of some sheets of drawings, undoubtedly the work of Jacques Androuet du Cerceau. These leaflets, fourteen in number, contain sixty-one different sketches, all of Italian subjects. It would be difficult to disagree with M. de Geymüller in his opinion that all these were drawn in Italy and early in Androuet's life, before 1534. The indications that they were leaves of Androuet's travelling sketch-book, or, at least, the sheets of paper on which he drew out, at night, the day's notes and memoranda, is very strong. No less than eleven of the sketches are made from models, plans, *etc.*, for the great church of St. Peter. These belong to a time when the whole design of that church was in question: when both Bramante and Raphael were dead, and the elaborateness and costly nature of the design made by the latter had caused a suspension of the work and a reconsideration: to the time just preceding the new and vigorous impulse given to the work by Paul III. It appears to be admitted that Androuet's visit to Italy came to an end just before the accession of Paul III, in 1534. M. de Geymüller published, some years ago, a large and important book on the different experimental plans for St. Peter's church. That work finds in chapters I and II of the present one a most important appendix.

Other sketches of the Munich collection give what are claimed to be plans of that palace which once stood where the *Piazza di San Pietro* now is, and was called Raphael's house—the house where Bramante as well as Raphael lived and died; plans of the Palazzo Farnese, too; and, more important still, a series of twenty-nine drawings of the *Cancellaria*, loveliest of Roman civil buildings, and second to no edifice of equal size and cost of all the creations of the Italian Renaissance.

The *first and second chapters* of the book before us are devoted to the above-named drawings; and it is to be regretted that it was not feasible to reproduce more of them. Perhaps this was not permitted: perhaps we have that publication to look for, coming from Munich itself. The *third chapter* deals with the influence of Italy upon Androuet: and here it must be urged that it was not Italy, nor the buildings of Italy, that our studious architect sought and found: but the theories and the attempted practice of a small body of Italians. The burden which the fine-art of architecture has to bear is in no place so visible as in the works of the men of the Renaissance. There are their designs by thousands in the collections of drawings, and by hundreds in volumes and portfolios of prints from engraved plates; there are, to compare with these, the few completed buildings; and from this whole body of enthusiastic and patient work we learn that the noble art of building must always in this world be a vision more than an actuality: one dreams of splendid things—one realizes small and slight things. If, by chance, a single fine dream takes form, if an ideally perfect château rises from the earth, these results follow: the owner is ruined, his family are burdened with debt, the building, not quite finished, passes into other hands, is disfigured, and soon torn down to patch the humbler buildings of the neighborhood or, at best, becomes a barrack, a convent, or, later, a museum. If by chance a church is started on a grandiose scale, it remains unfinished. No man's eye has ever seen a great cathedral complete: in view of this, even the cast-iron uniformity, the dull, modern square-and-compass work of Cologne can be forgiven, for at Cologne at least the spires rise into the rain-clouds, the bells thunder from the belfries, the mass of roofs and towers dominates the city when seen from a few miles off, and we are helped to an understanding of what a mediæval master-builder meant by a church. It is perhaps fortunate that the architecture of the original building, the choir of the fourteenth century and the base of the west tower, is not finer; for no great loss is suffered by the "restoration" of it into perfect harmony with the modern work, and, moreover, it is perfectly within reach of the modern architects to match it by following and piecing out the design which the old tower had left for their guidance. So that, on the whole, we have to be thankful for the modern cathedral. One is helped to conceive what a great cathedral would be, were it ever finished, by taking from Cologne a memory of its mass, its variety, its lofty look as if nothing could ever be higher—its completeness, in a word—and investing with these the loveliness of Chartres or the solemn and noble monotony of Bourges. And so we are brought back to the re-statement of the point, that noble architecture must always be a dream, a memory and an aspiration, far more than an actuality.

But in 1534 the world of artists was not convinced of that; and small

blame to them! energetic and full of sense of power as they were! Carpaccio's Saint Ursula pictures at Venice have their ideal architecture, designed for the occasion as freely as the strange, half-oriental costume which invests his figures; but even his arcaded porches are not more fantastically picturesque than the designs which grave men made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for their princely employers, and hoped to be allowed to carry out. The great Cagliari knew what ideal grandeur was, in long perspectives of colonnades, as we can see in vast canvasses which are to some of us the finest pictures on this earth: but even he could not out-dream our friend Androuet and his compeers. And what Androuet sought in Italy was, not the external aspect of cities or existing buildings, but the dreams and hopes of the few Italians who were busy idealizing architecture, and whom the disappointments of eighty years had not discouraged. The Renaissance was already an old story in Italy: its earlier epoch was passed, it was in the hands of the pupils of the pupils of Brunellesco and Alberti: but to a Frenchman it was new, as yet, in 1530. To a Frenchman, Gothic art had hardly said its last word: many churches, like St. Maclou at Rouen in style, many city-residences, like the Hôtel de la Tremouille and the still well-known Hôtel de Cluny, at Paris, many country-*châteaux*, like the famous Louis XII wing at Blois, were still new buildings, built during the preceding reign. The Classical Renaissance had shown itself, indeed, but as yet so rarely that it was still in the air, as a branch or offshoot of the new-found classical learning, rather than a controlling style of building. Androuet, more perhaps than any other Frenchman, had charged himself with the task of bringing this Italian conception of architecture, this supposed antique Roman way of building, across the Alps, as the real Roman way had come on a former occasion. And when in Italy he studies, it seems, not the buildings of the men of the first Renaissance, the masters of the *Cinquecento*, but the very latest style, wherever he can find it. He is young, he dreams of a perfect style which will answer all requirements; the days when he will engrave a thirteenth-century *château-fort* as one of a small selection of the Best Buildings of France, and do it faithfully, are yet far off: now, even when he makes a drawing of an existing building, he alters it to his taste: it is not the building he cares for, but the impression made upon his mind of what might be built, say in France. It is quite like Turner painting Lausanne, and putting in towers and grouping the actual towers that the whole may "compose" to suit him. And it is the natural impulse of the man who, indeed, is to be critical and interested hereafter in the comparison of monuments of art as not one of his contemporaries will be, but who is as yet in his youth and thinking of a propaganda, of a true revelation which he must preach to his countrymen.

But to return to M. de Geymüller's book: in *chapters IV* and *V*, he ex-

amines the manner of Du Cerceau as draughtsman and engraver; and he seems to make a worthy use of the great amount of material which has been at his disposal, in France and elsewhere, his especial object being the identification of the master's work at different periods of his life. In *chapter vi* comes up the old question, often answered with *yes* and sometimes negatively, was Jacques Androuet du Cerceau an architect in the modern sense, a designer and originator of buildings? The claim is a little difficult to establish, and impossible to deny with any certainty: the inquiry takes the reader into pleasant fields of examination, into good buildings that have perished, and others that exist: fields where this comment cannot follow: Charleval, Verneuil, Gaillon, the church of Montargis, the Château of the same name and its appendages, houses in Orléans, and parts even of the Louvre are considered; it seems, too, that Du Cerceau made a design for St. Eustache at Paris, or at least for its west front—the realization of which it would be well for Paris to possess.

*Chapter vii* consists of a full catalogue of the drawings which are known to be by Jacques Androuet, and of those which may be ascribed to him: and *chapter viii* deals with his published work, mainly, of course, his engravings; in the course of which a word is said for him as an early master of etching. *Chapter ix* is a *Résumé*: and, as all the volume hitherto has been devoted to the one Jacques Androuet *l'Ancien*, or the Senior, as he was called to distinguish him from another Jacques Androuet who appears later (perhaps a son), so the *résumé* deals with him and his work alone, and includes a very interesting discussion of the mission of engraving in the sixteenth century, a subject which cannot be undertaken here. The rest of the family—Jean and Baptiste, both architects of renown, and the less visible shadows that once bore the name—are the subject of *chapter x*: and, finally, there is a very full Bibliography, in itself interesting reading. So that the handsome quarto before us, though not exactly an epoch-making book, and perhaps missing a chance in not being more decidedly a living-over-again of that New Life on which the sixteenth century prided itself, in France, is yet a book to read through with sincere pleasure, and then to refer to on many an occasion. Like all such French books, yes, practically *all*, it has no index; unlike many, it is so far logically arranged and so free from the vice of writing “about and about” the subject, that what one wants he will generally find, pretty soon. Straightforward and simple presentation of his case seems to be our author's strong point: it is a good thing to excel in.

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